Amendments to the Claims:

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A data processing system comprising a packet switched backplane having a plurality of node slots wherein at least two of said node slots comply with the PICMG 2.16 standard and a plurality of node cards connected to said node slots characterized in that dedicated links connect Ethernet transmit pins of at least one of said node slots to Ethernet receive pins of at least one aggregation slot and connect Ethernet receive pins of at least one of said node slots to Ethernet transmit pins of at least one aggregation slot to make direct point-to-point Ethernet connection, said aggregation slot comprising at least one other node slot ~~as well as connect Ethernet receive pins of at least one of said node slots to Ethernet transmit pins of said aggregation slot to make a direct point-to-point Ethernet connection~~ wherein an aggregation card comprising a node card equipped with an Ethernet bridging unit and an external Ethernet connector, wherein the external Ethernet connector connects to external address, and wherein the aggregation card is connected to said aggregation slot ~~and~~ so that said Ethernet bridging unit connects to the Ethernet transmit and receive pins of the at least one aggregation slot and bridges between said node cards and external addresses ~~by means of said external Ethernet connector~~through the direct point-to-point Ethernet connection.

6. (Original) The data processing system according to claim 5 wherein said Ethernet bridging unit is an Ethernet switch.

7. (Original) The data processing system according to claim 5 wherein each of said node cards is connected to two aggregation cards.

8-9. (Cancelled)